

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

COL. 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowl-

edge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond *nor* free: but Christ *is* all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also *do* ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

NOTES

Affection for Things Above

Lesson Text: Colossians 3:1-17

Related Scriptures: Psalm 31:19-24;
Romans 6:1-14; 8:18-25; Galatians 5:16-26; Ephesians 1:3-14

TIME: A.D. 60

PLACE: from Rome

GOLDEN TEXT—"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

Lesson Exposition

PUT ATTENTION ON HEAVEN— Col. 3:1-4

Raised with Christ (Col. 3:1). Paul challenged the Colossians to live up to what they were in Christ. In God's sight, when Christ died, all who would believe were crucified with Him. The assertion begins with a condition. Paul was confident that his readers were indeed Christians, but by using a conditional clause, Paul drove his readers to examine their lives.

Paul then gave two commands that apply to all who are risen with Christ. First, genuine Christians who have spiritual life in Christ should give every effort to obtain heavenly things.

Dead with Christ (Col. 3:2-3). The second command is to be motivated by the things of heaven rather than by the temporal concerns of earthly life.

In Colossians 3:3, Paul gave a reason to support his commands. Christians have died with Christ. Their lives are hidden with Christ in God. There are two senses in which Christians are hidden. First, they are hidden from people in the world. Unbelievers do not value the things of God; so they do not appreciate the lives of Christians. Second, the

full extent of the believer's life in Christ is hidden from view today (I John 3:2).

Revealed with Christ (Col. 3:4). Christians can anticipate glory with Christ. Just as Christ died, rose from the grave, and then ascended to glory in heaven, so Christians have died with Him, been raised to new life in Him, and will one day share in His glory.

PUT OFF UNGODLINESS— Col. 3:5-11

Abandon obvious sins (Col. 3:5-6). Paul challenged the Colossians to abandon all kinds of sins. He started by enumerating several sins that are obviously violations of God's moral standards. Sexual vices defile God's rightful place for sex within marriage alone. Covetousness, the desire for what belongs to another, raises one's personal cravings above God's demands; so it constitutes idolatry.

All the sins listed in verse 5 are subject to God's wrath. His settled opposition to sin requires that He judge those who disobey His commands.

Abandon past sins (Col. 3:7). Paul wanted to warn all Christians not to underestimate the tenacity of sin. As

long as Christians live on earth, they will have to struggle against sin.

Abandon common sins (Col. 3:8-9). Paul turned his sights on several common sins that infect every life. “Anger” and “wrath” refer to the uncontrolled emotion that lashes out at others. “Malice” speaks of a desire to hurt another person. “Blasphemy” is insulting speech against either God or others. “Filthy communications” is foul-mouthed talk. Lying is speaking what is false.

Accept your new identity (Col. 3:10-11). The flesh produces sin even in the life of a Christian. When people are saved, they receive a new nature, which is made after the image of Christ. The Christian’s new position should shape his practice. One day, all Christians will be entirely Christlike.

When Christ is in a person, there is no limit to the transformation that He can produce. Christ can overcome all the barriers that have divided humans into rival factions.

PUT ON GODLINESS—Col. 3:12-17

Attitude of compassion (Col. 3:12-13). All who are in Christ should imitate Christ. Instead of promoting themselves and exploiting others, Christians should put on a compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, and forgiving attitude. The standard for Christian behavior is Christ Himself.

Attitude of love (Col. 3:14). All the qualities enumerated in verses 12 and 13 can be summed up in a single word—love (“charity”). God demonstrated this love in giving His Son to die on the cross for sinners. It is voluntary action to help others in need, despite the personal cost. It leads to spiritual perfection, or maturity.

Attitude of peace (Col. 3:15). The worldly person chooses to do what brings personal advantage. The Christian, however, is different. God’s peace is to “rule” and act as his umpire in

determining whether his actions, attitudes, and desires are worthy.

Attitude of thankfulness (Col. 3:16-17). The word of Christ provides wisdom for life. This wisdom enables the Christian to live up to what God designed him to be. The joy that results not only fills the Christian’s own heart but also overflows in all kinds of teaching, encouragement, and praise within the community of believers.

Thanksgiving should affect every part of the Christian’s life. Every word should reflect the character of the Lord Jesus. Every deed should be motivated by His love. Every response should manifest gratitude to God.

—Daniel J. Estes

QUESTIONS

1. How did Paul prompt the Colossians to reflect on their spiritual condition?
2. In what sense is the life of Christians hidden with Christ?
3. What does Christ’s return promise for Christians?
4. What kinds of obvious sins did Paul reject as wrong for Christians?
5. Why is it dangerous for Christians to do what comes naturally to them?
6. What kinds of common sins did Paul mention?
7. How does being a new person in Christ provide power for spiritual transformation?
8. How does Christ’s forgiveness provide the standard for Christian compassion to others?
9. What role does the peace of God play in a Christian’s decisions?
10. How should thankfulness be evidenced in the Christian’s life?

—Daniel J. Estes

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. A believer's value system is different from the world's; we live for Christ (Col. 3:1-2).
2. Because Christ lives in us, we have hope of vanquishing sin from our lives (vss. 3-6).
3. Believers are not to hold on to sins that ruled their old lives (vss. 7-11).
4. To follow Christ means to exhibit in all our relationships the virtues that characterize Him (vss. 12-14).
5. A church grounded in God's Word will have mutual teaching and encouragement (vss. 15-16).
6. Everything we do should be done for Christ's glory (vs. 17).

—Jarl K. Waggoner

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. What are "things which are above" (Col. 3:1) that we are to seek?
2. How can we set our minds on things above (vs. 2) and not on things of this world?
3. What are the implications of the truth that our life is hidden in Christ (vs. 3) and that Christ is "our life" (vs. 4), not merely a part of our life?
4. Is it correct to say that a Christian has no excuse for sinful behavior (vss. 5-10)? Explain. If so, how should we think about Christians sinning?
5. What does it mean that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, etc. (vs. 11)? What are the practical implications of this?
6. How would the consistent practice of the virtues listed in verses 12 and 13 change individual lives and the church today?

—Jarl K. Waggoner

Golden Text Illuminated

"Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

What motivates you? What determines what you do and how you spend your time and money? Every believer must think about such matters.

Everything the child of God says and does is to exalt the name of Jesus.

Consider your speech. Does it reflect your professed love for Jesus? Does every idle word honor Him? Is your speech wholesome (Jas. 3:5-6, 9-10)?

If not, you need to prayerfully heed what God is saying and learn to control your tongue. You must work at making sure your words please God at all times. You must not abuse others with your speech. These are serious matters that reflect whether we really believe that God is the Creator and Lord of all.

Now, think about your actions. Could someone tell by your actions that you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do your deeds cause others to think about the Savior?

It is easy to go through our daily grind without thinking about what we do.

Notice what Jesus said in Matthew 5:16: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." What do people see when they look at your deeds?

Developing a consistent, God-honoring life takes work. It calls for sacrifice and self-examination. It requires a willingness to place your life under the searchlight of God's Word. It demands confessing and forsaking speech and actions that are sinful.

—James R. Gordon